

To Spy or Not to Spy?

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I read the story of Robert Berlin's refusal to spy for the CIA in Russia and got the feeling he considers himself a hero for declining to aid his country.

I can't understand his explanation. He said many American travelers are being embarrassed by the questions of Russian authorities. His blurting out the request to spy will serve to strengthen Moscow suspicion and there will be much more questioning in the future.

The request of the CIA "looked too dangerous," he said. Other people placed in his position probably would have agreed to help since they might realize the job is necessary. Berlin's "confession" will aggravate the chances these others will take.

Our President's decisions frequently are based on information he gets from the CIA. Berlin inadvertently did Russia a big favor because he likely has closed off the source of this information.

I hope no one is so naive he can't see the importance of counter intelligence. It is not a pleasant chore but is essential.

I believe the real motive for Berlin's action was to see his name and picture in the newspapers. I am reminded of an old saying:

"If you could have been silent, you would have been a wise man."

JOSEF HIPPELE

(Editor's note—This is one of many letters received on Mr. Berlin's refusal of a request by a CIA officer to reveal certain of his observations on a tour of Russia. All editors resent Berlin's explanation of the CIA action.)

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